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## **GRANT AWARDED FOR “DRIVING LOUISIANA’S ECONOMY” INITIATIVE USDA Rural Development Presents LSU \$135,000 for Mobile Classroom**

BATON ROUGE, August 2, 2005 – USDA Rural Development State Director Michael B. Taylor presented Louisiana State University a \$135,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant to support LSU’s Business and Technology Center’s (LBTC) “Driving Louisiana’s Economy” initiative—a mobile classroom that will offer education and training seminars in rural parishes throughout Louisiana.

“The mobile classroom will travel to 37 parishes in Louisiana to provide technical assistance and training services to small and emerging businesses,” said Charles F. D’Agostino, executive director of the Louisiana Business and Technology Center at LSU’s E. J. Ourso College of Business. “Our goal is to enhance economic development in Louisiana through support of our small businesses—and development of new businesses.”

The USDA Rural Development Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program helps public bodies, private non-profit corporations, and federally-recognized Indian tribal groups support the development of small and emerging private business enterprises in rural areas.

“As a result of this USDA Rural Development grant program, cutting-edge business development training will be offered by the faculty and staff of LSU’s E. J. Ourso College of Business in rural communities throughout Louisiana,” said Taylor. “Training that may have been considered out-of-reach for many will now be available locally.”

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana. The Louisiana USDA Rural Development State Office is located at 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, and the telephone number is (318) 473-7921. There are four area offices located throughout the state to serve Louisiana residents. Further information on USDA Rural Development’s loan and grant programs can be obtained by visiting Rural Development’s web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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